

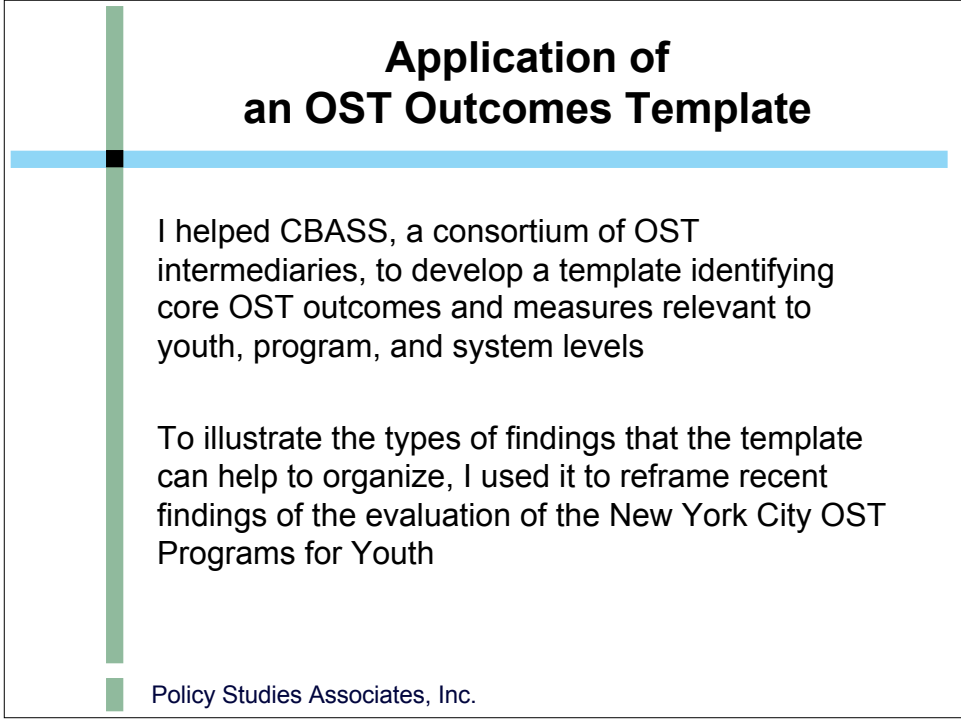


Using a Standard Template and Measures to Describe Outcomes Sought through OST Programming

Elizabeth Reisner

**American Educational Research Association
March 24, 2008**

Policy Studies Associates, Inc.



Application of an OST Outcomes Template

I helped CBASS, a consortium of OST intermediaries, to develop a template identifying core OST outcomes and measures relevant to youth, program, and system levels

To illustrate the types of findings that the template can help to organize, I used it to reframe recent findings of the evaluation of the New York City OST Programs for Youth

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Purposes Sought

Purposes for identifying core outcomes:

- Help crystallize thinking by intermediaries about desired results of OST programs
- Specify avenues for achieving accountability
- Demonstrate the value of high-quality programming at scale

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Criteria for Selecting Outcomes

Selected outcomes needed to be:

- Field tested in OST evaluations
- Likely to impose minimal data burden
- Likely to require little judgment or inference
- Applicable to many OST service approaches
- Focused on strengths rather than deficits

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Test of Template Using Real OST Evaluation Findings

Used Year 2 findings of the evaluation of the New York City OST Programs for Youth, sponsored by the city's Department of Youth and Community Development

Did the template permit key findings to be highlighted in a reasonable narrative?

Did the template encompass the evaluation's main findings?

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Youth Outcomes

High program engagement

- High, sustained daily program attendance
- High year-to-year retention in the program

High educational effort, commitment, and skills

- High daily attendance
- Grade promotion leading to HS graduation
- Mastery of academic and non-academic skills

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Program Outcomes

Structural features that promote youth success

- Low staff to youth ratio
- High educational level of director and staff
- Outreach to parents
- Youth input into program design and operations

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Program Outcomes (continued)

Activity characteristics that promote youth success

- Positive youth relationships with adults and peers
- Youth opportunities for choice and leadership
- Explicit activity sequencing
- Active, hands-on learning opportunities
- Breadth of age-appropriate content and activities

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System Outcomes

Availability and use of tools to support programs

- Participant-tracking system
- Partner agreements and policies
- Quality standards
- Technical assistance and staff training
- Sustainable financial support
- Unified governance structure

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System Outcomes (continued)

Achievement of scale in youth participation

- Growth in number of program slots
- Engagement of leaders across youth-serving sectors

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Utility of Template

This exercise showed that the outcomes template provides relevant organizers for reporting major findings of a study designed without knowledge of the underlying typology

Not yet answered:

- Can the template work in organizing findings of OST evaluations designed by other researchers?
- Can it facilitate OST evaluation design?

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